

## **Introduction to the special issue on Space, Time and Political Economy**

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This special issue follows the third annual conference of the Portuguese Association of Political Economy (EcPol), which took place between January 31 and February 1, 2020, at the Faculty of Economics and Management / Cat3lica Porto Business School of the Catholic University of Portugal (at Porto), and was preceded by a winter school taking place in 30 January 2020 at the Faculty of Economics of the University of Porto. Two of

the articles published in the special issue, namely those authored by José Madureira Pinto and Maria Filomena Molder, were initially presented as keynote lectures at the conference. The other articles were either presented at the conference or submitted subsequently to the open call and accepted after having undergone the review process.

The special issue is composed of six different articles reflecting the theoretical and methodological pluralism that is the key feature of political economy. In different ways they all reflect the main topics of the special issue, whether by exploring different understandings of space and reconceptualizing them in connection with political economy or by providing more concrete, empirically grounded analyses of specific spatio-temporal phenomena from a political economy standpoint.

The first two articles are striking examples of the way in which political economy, in the specific attention it pays to space and time as substantive realities, draws important insights from other fields. Maria Filomena Molder's "The Spatial-Temporal Web of the Inhabited City" is a philosophical exploration of lived space. Drawing on the historian Michel de Certeau and his views of urban living, it puts forward a critique of a cartographic depiction of space. Taking de Certeau, as well as philosophical (Kant, Wittgenstein) and literary (Dante, Goethe) sources as guiding inspirations, Molder presents a reflection on the potentialities of a narrative and metaphoric interpretation of space. In the experience of urban living, walking is depicted as "space opening" and this, Molder argues with de Certeau, no theory can encompass and no map can retrieve. In so doing, Molder shows the blind spots of a standard view of space and turns to the narrative of ordinary practices.

This attention to ordinary practices, that is, to a view "from below" is center stage in José Madureira Pinto's "Space and Innovation: a sociological view from below". With it we shift from a philosophical to a sociological approach; here, the exploration "from below" explicitly indicates that the views suggested are grounded in empirical evidence, notably in sociological field research. The article also has deep theoretical implications, as it offers a schematization of the several ways in which the social sciences approach the spatial dimension of social reality (naming them "Space-Place", "Space-Territory" and "Space-Representation"), while also proposing to reconceptualize the ways in which the social sciences problematize this spatial dimension; this latter aim is achieved through a distinction between "Intensity 1" analyses that are descriptive-functional and "Intensity 2" analyses that focus on the dynamic structure of power relations rooted in inequalities and on how they are institutionalized and transformed.

The following article, by Gabriel Leite Mota, “Unsatisfying ordinalism: the breach through which happiness re(entered) economics” also has a theoretical import, in that it departs from mainstream economics, showing how the insufficiencies of ordinalism paved the way for reassessing subjective wellbeing in economics. The move from cardinal utility, in which the latter somehow reflects the psychological intensity of human preferences, towards ordinal utility, in which only the order of options chosen matters, had led to a neglect of psychology within economic theory. Studies of happiness are part of a return of psychology into economics, which has implications for the analysis of human well-being and policy recommendations, including those made when using economic theory within regional science.

The other articles in this special issue put forward concrete political economy analyses inspired by the theoretical framework of the issue. Oskar Lubinski’s “Timescapes and the vernacular language of Cuba’s popular economies” takes as its starting point the ways in which different economies create different temporalities in order to present the results of empirical research undertaken in Cuba. The analysis of everyday practices, in the context of which vernacular language must be understood, is central to this analysis. While Molder’s article provides a philosophical approach to human practices, drawing also on what Ludwig Wittgenstein saw as an anthropological or ethnographic approach to human practices and language, Lubinski’s contribution provides an applied approach where ethnography is put to work when studying a specific vernacular language in a concrete spatial context.

An empirical and applied approach is also found in the last two articles in the issue, both of which deal with specific realities of the Portuguese economy. Vasco Coelho’s “Non-linear internationalization processes in Portugal: Evidence across Retail, Construction and Software Development Industries”, focuses on the study of firm internationalization logics observable in Portugal in the three sectors mentioned in the article’s title. The author applies a qualitative multiple-case study design, and concludes that in open small economies, such as the Portuguese, firm internationalization can become a learning opportunity. Light weighted, *à la carte* and reversible internationalization practices, as well as the deployment of fragile resources (characteristic of internationalization processes in emerging contexts such as Portugal’s), should not be seen as abnormal events, but rather as firms’ attempts to adjust to real economy constraints.

In Pizzaro and Ferrero's article, "Sustainable public procurement in Portugal: the case of two public schools' canteens", the authors explain how the State and Portuguese legal framework and mandatory public procurement can aid or be a tool in innovative practices towards a more sustainable food system in the public education system. They note how low cost continues to be the main criteria, making it difficult to use other requisites or features in public procurement demands. Public procurement can be a part of the solution if there is a shift to multidimensional demands other than costs, and work as a driver into sustainable, greener, based on family agriculture, food system.

The six articles are illustrative of the concern with an interdisciplinary (or indeed transdisciplinary) approach to the study of concrete economies and societies, which are here addressed focusing on different spatial realities, ranging from more philosophical accounts of space to more specific analyses of spatially situated economies and societies thus widening the scope of political economy in its connection with regional studies.

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